



TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMISSION

Research and Data Division (RADD)

The Washington Coded Fatal Crash (CFC) Data Files

The WTSC is Washington's State Highway Safety Office and responsible for state-level management and release of fatal crash information used for highway safety planning and Governor's performance reporting as authorized under [RCW 43.59](#) and [WAC Title 467](#).

The WTSC RADD manages the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) and the Crash Report Sampling System (CRSS) through a cooperative agreement. The NHTSA provides public access to these official data sources on their [website](#). The WTSC does not release in-production FARS or CRSS data.

The WTSC works with our traffic safety partners to gather all source documents involved in the investigation of fatal crashes. This information is used to code fatal crashes into the national FARS database. Using these same coding methods, the WTSC creates the Washington Coded Fatal Crash (CFC) analytical data files. The Washington CFC files contain a subset of information that is ultimately also included in the FARS national database so while there are some similarities, the FARS and CFC data files are distinctly different.

The Washington CFC files are processed to derive binary analytical variables aligned with definitions developed for Target Zero, Washington's Strategic Highway Safety Plan. The analytical variables ensure that all traffic safety partners are analyzing and reporting state fatal crash information consistently and accurately. Target Zero definitions have been developed for consistent reporting between the Washington CFC files and statewide crash data files managed by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). WSDOT crash data, including fatalities, may be requested from their [website](#).

The Washington CFC files are released three times per year on the following schedule:

| File Name | Release Timeframe | Special Notes |
|------------------------------------|---|--|
| Calendar Year Preliminary Files #1 | May/June following the complete calendar year | Used in HSP and HSIP target setting. |
| Calendar Year Preliminary Files #2 | October following the complete calendar year | Includes specified drug results and levels |
| Calendar Year Final Files | January - one year following the complete calendar year | Final fatality counts match final FARS fatality counts |



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Individuals may request the Washington CFC files by submitting a request [here](#). Washington CFC file users are asked to complete annual confirmation that ongoing access to the data files is still required. Active data file users are notified via email when files are available.

Washington CFC files are provided to data users through a Secure File Transfer (SFT) file exchange system. Files are made available in SAS (.sas7bdat) and EXCEL (.xlsx) file formats. The CRASH file is a “single-row” file (one row of data per crash) that includes crash-level detail. The PERSON file is a “multi-row” file (multiple rows of data per crash, multiple rows of data per vehicle with single row of data per person involved in the crash) and includes information about the Crash, Vehicles, and Persons involved in the crash. All the variables in the CRASH file are also included in the PERSON file.

Washington CFC users publishing research or reports using the PRELIMINARY CFC data files should notify the WTSC Research Director. The Research Director will work with the data user to determine if the preliminary data is complete and accurate enough to support the analysis performed. Typically, information about alcohol, drugs, and decedent race/ethnicity is not complete enough for analysis until the October file release, however other analytical topics may also be affected by incomplete data depending in the preliminary files. Users publishing research or reports using FINAL CFC data files do not need to notify the WTSC, although we appreciate being aware of how the data is being used and disseminated to improve traffic safety.

All analysis and publications using the Washington CFC data files should include reference to the data source. The suggested data source citation is:

Washington Coded Fatal Crash (CFC) Data Files YYYY-YYYY. [optional] YYYY is preliminary as of [date of preliminary data file]. Provided by the Washington Traffic Safety Commission.